



The Jewish

Gaily Forward

Tevet-Adar II 5776 ■ January-March 2016

The Most Important Thing Is Not to Make Ourselves Be Afraid

BY RABBI TED RITER

San Bernadino was this week's mass killing. Paris is still fresh in our minds. Jerusalem stabbings and attacks are daily news. And, in the time between this article's due date and when the JGF is mailed, there are likely to be more domestic and foreign attacks. What do we do with this violence, our sadness and our fear? Certainly we can advocate for public policy, legislation and peace, but those take time and are ultimately beyond our control. How about the fear? Can we control our fears?

Reb Nachman of Bratzlav (Ukraine, 1772-1810) taught:

ללכ דחפל אל רקעהו דאמ רצ רשג ולכ סלועה לך

"The entire world is but a very narrow bridge, but the most important thing is not to make ourselves be afraid."

About what exactly was Reb Nachman speaking? A literal bridge in his own town? The bridge between our pre-birth and after death worlds? The life I live today and where I would like to see myself tomorrow? The dangerous physical world? It's certainly possible Reb Nachman was speaking of all of these worlds and the challenges of traveling all of these bridges. Unfortunately, not only does Reb Nachman *not* tell us which bridges we are traversing, he does not give us guidance on how to make ourselves *not* be afraid. Yet, I believe his point is that we have a choice in our fears.

Our Mussar sages (beginning in 19th century Lithuania) teach us that in order to build one muscle, we instead focus on its opposite. In this case, courage might be the obvious opposite of fear. And courage, as with all of our Jewish values, is a choice that is found on a spectrum. On one extreme are those who have no courage to try something new, to raise their hands to ask a question, to venture into the unknown, or to travel to a foreign country. Most of us would agree that these people might struggle to find fulfillment in life. On the other extreme are those who know *no* fear, and strangely enough, because they never feel like they are pushing their own boundaries, are inhibiting their own growth. They, in their fearlessness, might even border on foolishness.

The ideal is to find the balance: Having enough courage to take a first step but not so much courage that we imperil our well-being, that we fail to feel accomplished, to learn and to grow. Our growing edges are in the liminal point between comfort and fear.

Moving immediately from a place of fear to being able to walk into a fire storm is not expected by our Mussar sages. Instead, they teach us if we build up our "courage" muscle one small bit at a time, we will eventually be able to overcome greater and greater fears. The challenge, therefore, is to take on our small fears with courage: Volunteering to lead a project, having that difficult conversation with a colleague or family member, venturing into a new neighborhood. Though perhaps seen as small steps and in no way approaching our fears that come from observing the violence in the world around us, the more we exercise courage the stronger we become. And, when we have courage in one place in life, it can gradually shift to other places as well.

The world is a very narrow bridge. It can feel unsafe in so many ways and in so many places. And yet, by building our courage, we can slowly feel more stable and protected on our journey.

Sha'ar Zahav Lights Up the Castro

BY MARTIN RAWLINGS-FEIN

On the fourth night of Chanukah, Sha'ar Zahav, the Castro Merchants and Castro Community Benefit District descended upon Jane Warner Plaza for a Chanukah celebration. Our First Vice President, Michael Chertok, said that we were "excited to partner with the Castro Merchants Association and Community Benefit District to celebrate Chanukah at Castro and Market St. This Jewish holiday celebrates religious freedom; we hope our singing, dancing and blazing candles helped bring a bit more light into the world at time when this freedom feels threatened by darkness." People

from all over the neighborhood joined us as we lit our large menorah, danced (led by Bruce Bierman), ate sufganyot and spun a giant dreidel built by our member Beth Sousa.

The schmoozing was fun and the large menorah lighting meaningful. Senator Mark Leno dedicated his light to Officer Jane Warner (z'l) for her work in the community. Supervisor Scott Weiner brought it back to the people in his district, saying that

a Chanukah celebration in the Castro was well overdue because the district has been so ably represented by Jewish mensch-es like Supervisor Harvey Milk (z'l), Senator Leno and former Supervisor Bevan Dufty. Rabbi Riter dedicated his light to doing our part to bring our personal lights to a world mourning recent tragedy, and Cantor Bernstein brought her light for those working for human rights. As the intention setting continued, the menorah burned brighter with each twist of the bulbs. Once our chanukiyah was lit, the crowd took to dancing in the streets, punc-



uated with the bell ring of the F line announcing its departure.

This is the first time in recent memory that Sha'ar Zahav has worked with the Castro Merchants on a Chanukah celebration. We were all so pleased with the turnout that the Castro Merchants and Community Benefit District wanted to co-sponsor future events with Sha'ar Zahav. Community engagement was the goal of this lighting, and the event was a big hit with many new faces.

Our former president Karen Schiller, put it best when she said that the best part of the evening was "seeing all the smiling people enjoying a chance to celebrate Chanukah on their way home from work."



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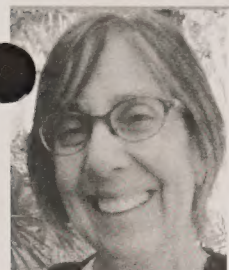
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Dreaming Together



I DON'T KNOW if you remember how many times I have told you that I hate change. Like many people, I want my life to run on a predictable, albeit a bit boring, line. But life doesn't stay the same. I have to remember that the world is spinning, every day is new, possibilities for great moments are around, and it is wonderful and scary all at the same time. My mantra has to be that change is normal and change equals opportunities.

As Cantor Bernstein has told me and many of you over the last year and a half, this is our time to dream big about what we can be and where we want to go in the future. So let's dream together.

Fortunately, you have been helping me dream about the future. About 90 members of our congregation attended our last Town Hall meeting. Thank you for showing up and participating. For those of you who couldn't make it, we focused on our identity work. In our discussion I found the dream that the cantor talks about, the hope for our future and our strong link to our past.

The mere fact that we are focused on our identity links us to the past. From our beginning we were focused on our identity. When I first came to services at Sha'ar Zahav, sometime around 1980, we were the only real place for the Bay Area's gay and lesbian Jewish community. Many of us are connected

Sha'ar Zahav because of that past.

Times have changed and so have we. Our congregation is full of people from almost all communities in the Bay Area. We are a true melting pot. I think of Sha'ar Zahav as the place where almost anyone can fit in and feel at home. As many people stated during the Town Hall meeting, we can't picture being at any other synagogue in the Bay Area. Sha'ar Zahav is our Jewish home.

One statement of our identity rang so true for me; not as aspirational, but as where we always have been as a community. See if it rings true for you, at least some of the time:

Sha'ar Zahav's ritual services celebrate a diversity of beliefs and identities, give meaning to our everyday lives and Jewish journeys, and are expressed through our own siddur and congregant participation.

For those of you who haven't been around much lately, exciting things are happening. And although we are in a time of transition, difficult and wonderful as it is, we are engaging in services that have moved me to tears, services that have made me laugh, discussions that have been engaging and a thoughtful progression into our future. While we change, I want to hold on to what has always been true for us. We are uniquely wonderful and we continue to dream our future.

Goodbye to Rebecca:

I want to take a moment to write about one unexpected transition for me. Rebecca Weiner, our educator, has announced that she is departing. By the time you read this, Rebecca will already be onto the next chapter in her life. Rebecca will never, however, be gone from Sha'ar Zahav. She has been the glue that has held our Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer together for the last seven years. Rebecca has hired the teachers, met with the families, brought the snacks and added that bit of herself that was so lovable to our Saturday mornings.

I have seen children run up to Rebecca and throw their little selves upon her for a hug. They not only loved seeing Rebecca, they loved learning from her. One time I was able to be at Beit Sefer's Opening Circle. Rebecca was telling a story about Manny and Stinky. The kids were intent on what she was saying. When she asked questions, hands flew up to answer. She had a way of making it fun and educational all at the same time.

I will miss Rebecca's ideas and enthusiasm. I will miss the way that she fought for the children who attended Beit Sefer. I will miss seeing her dog Manny in her arms. We wish the best for Rebecca as she moves on to her next journey. And, as I wish Rebecca the best, I am also pleased to announce that Martin Rawlings-Fein has been appointed the interim Director of Family and Children's Education.

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The Jewish Gaily Forward is published four times a year by Congregation Sha'ar Zahav: January, April, July, and October. The deadline for submissions is one month prior to the publication date: December 1, March 1, June 1, September 1. All submissions to the JGF must meet editorial and length requirements.

Specifications supplied upon request.

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JCRC Report

BY TERRY FLETCHER

Since Fall 2007, I have served as Congregation Sha'ar Zedek's representative to the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council



(JCRC). The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) is a public affairs organization working on behalf of the Bay Area Jewish community. It represents synagogues and Jewish organizations on critical issues affecting Jews as individuals and as a community. At Rabbi Riter's suggestion, I will be submitting quarterly reports to the JGF on what

the JCRC is up to and what I have been doing.

When then-president Ora Prochovnik appointed me to the JCRC eight years ago, my goal was to work to transform the JCRC into an organization that better represents the full spectrum of views present in the organized Jewish community, particularly with regards to Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I have also done my best to bring CSZ's progressive and queer voice to the table when it come to all issues the JCRC addresses.

I currently serve on the Public Policy Committee of the JCRC. This committee develops and proposes consensus statements on domestic issues for consideration of the larger council. We evaluate many pieces of proposed legislation in the California Legislature and deliberate as to which ones merit endorsement by the JCRC. For the past

year, the Public Policy Committee has been working on a consensus statement on economic justice. I am proud to be part of that process and many of my suggestions for that statement have been accepted by the committee.

In order to gather input and gauge the opinions of Jews who are members of JCRC member organizations, the JCRC will also be holding periodic town hall meetings and using new polling technology. I will keep you informed about opportunities to get involved.

In the upcoming months, the JCRC plans to draft a consensus statement on racial justice, and I hope to contribute to that process. A town hall meeting on racial justice is scheduled for March 22 in the East Bay.

If you have any feedback or questions about the JCRC and my role as your representative feel free to contact me at gillianf19@gmail.com or 510-859-3719.

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Purim is Just Around the Corner!

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BLACK BEAN SALAD

Ingredients:

1 1/4 pounds dry black beans
4 teaspoons chili powder
4 teaspoons dry mustard
4 teaspoons ground cumin
1 tablespoon salt
1 pound small tender green zucchini, ends trimmed
1 pound small, tender golden zucchini, ends trimmed
1/2 pound roasted red bell pepper, cut into 1 1/2-inch x 1/4-inch julienne
1 small bunch cilantro, chopped coarsely

Vinaigrette:

6 tablespoons fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon cayenne
1 teaspoon sugar
Salt and pepper to taste
2 1/2 teaspoons chili oil
1/2 cup olive oil

Serves 10 to 12

Soak beans overnight
1 1/2 hours to prepare

Todd S. Rose

The Hebrew *humus b'tahina* literally means "garbanzos in sesame paste." Garbanzos are eaten in many forms in Israel and the rest of the Middle East as a staple in the diet. *Nahil*, a traditional Purim dish of salted and peppered garbanzos eaten like peanuts, recalls the Purim heroine Esther, who is said to have restricted her diet in the king's palace to beans and peas, lest she break the Jewish dietary laws. Black beans are a South American and Caribbean food, and we have no evidence whether they were among the beans Queen Esther allowed herself. In any case, this dish is safe for dietary laws, and will impress your friends.

- Soak the beans overnight in water to cover. Pour off water.
- Pre-heat the oven to 375 degrees.
- Make the dressing by combining all vinaigrette ingredients except the oils, then slowly beating in the oils with a whisk.
- Put soaked beans in a large pot with about one and one-half inches of water covering them. Add seasonings and salt to flavor beans. Bring to a boil and simmer over low heat for fifty to sixty minutes, or when beans are tender, but not falling apart.
- Drain and rinse the beans well but gently, being careful not to tear them. While the beans are still warm, coat them with half the vinaigrette, so they will absorb more flavor. Reserve the rest of the dressing for the vegetables.
- Meanwhile, bake the zucchini whole for twenty-five to thirty-five minutes or until tender, but *not* mushy. This is very important. When cool enough to handle, cut lengthwise once, then slice each half into three-eighths inch chunks on the diagonal.
- Dress the zucchini with the rest of the vinaigrette.
- Combine the dressed beans, dressed zucchini, bell peppers and cilantro. Be sure that all dressing is in the finished salad.
- The salad will keep one day before getting mushy. To keep it longer, don't add the zucchini until ready to serve.



Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

Out of Our KITCHEN CLOSETS is a collection of tried and true recipes submitted by members, families and friends of Congregation Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco -- a city noted both for its good food and its thriving gay community. Each entry was carefully tested and tasted. We were looking for easy to prepare recipes that taste great -- and we got 150 of them!

What is Gay Jewish Cooking? It is the traditional dishes of our congregants' ancestors, updated and translated for our fast-paced society. For the adventuresome, we have Japanese Pumpkin Soup that's kosher for Passover. For the traditionalist, you'll find 17 types of kugel, and a classic California Quiche. And don't be shocked to find a slice of kiwi next to the blintzes.

The Cookbook is sprinkled with the heart-warming stories that invariably surround Jewish family life -- both traditional *and* extended. And, the Introduction chronicles the ten-year history of this dynamic Congregation.

No matter how you slice it, *Out of Our KITCHEN CLOSETS* will satisfy your hunger, warm your heart, and make you proud. So enjoy!

\$12.95

BY IRENE OGUS

One of my favorite quotes from the elegant and witty singer and entertainer Kitty Carlisle is: "Once you're over 50, breakfast comes every 15 minutes."

As someone who fits that demographic, it seems that both Jewish and secular holidays come more frequently than they used to!

Get ready for Purim with this wonderful recipe, good for carnivores and vegetarians alike. You just have to remember to either soak the beans

the night before or use canned.

Or, tie a piece of string around your finger! (Now you know I'm really old).

Enjoy.

P.S. In case you've never seen the back cover of our cookbook, here it is. It says quite a lot about us.

The JGF is going quarterly!

In order to continue to bring you the features you love like articles about our members, teachings from our rabbi and updates from our president and educator, the *Jewish Gaily Forward* is going quarterly starting with this issue.

This means our next deadline is March 1st, and you can expect your next issue in April.

If you have ideas for articles or have comments you would like to share with us, please email us at jgf@shaarzahav.org.

Seth Eisen Performs “Remy Charlip: From Brooklyn to the Bay Area”

**A Performance-Lecture co-sponsored by CSZ and Keshet
Sunday, January 31, 4:00–6:00 pm**



Join Sha’ar Zahav and Keshet for a dazzling performance-lecture about seminal gay Jewish dancer/artist Remy Charlip (1929–2012) presented by artist and performer Seth Eisen.

A precocious Jewish boy raised in Brooklyn, Charlip was an integral part of the New York avant-garde of the 1950s and 60s. Charlip was a founding member of The Merce Cunningham Dance Company and choreographing for The Living Theater and The Judson Church Dance Theater, as well as numerous Bay Area choreographers and dance companies.

Charlip also wrote and illustrated over 30 picture books, receiving three New York Times Best Illustrated Book citations. The Library of Congress named Charlip a National Treasure.

Eisen’s interdisciplinary performances unearth and elevate the stories of LGBTQ ancestors. He will be joined by dancer James Graham, an Izzie award-winning teacher of Gaga, an Israeli dance form developed by choreographer Ohad Naharin. This dynamic event is part of Eisen’s upcoming premiere of *The Charlip Project*, reviving the iconoclastic life and work of Remy Charlip, opening hearts and minds to this queer Jewish original.



Be the first to discover this seminal gay ancestor in a not-to-be-missed celebration about how gay Jewish lineage is passed on from generation to generation.

A reception will follow the performance.

Celebrate Tu BiSh'vat with a Seder

Courtesy of reformjudaism.org

Tu BiSh'vat or the "New Year of the Trees" is Jewish Arbor Day. The holiday is observed on the 15th (tu) of the Hebrew month of Sh'vat (Jan 24-25, 2016).

You may have heard of a Passover seder, but did you know that many people celebrate Tu BiSh'vat with seders also?

With the revival of Jewish mysticism—*kabbalah*—in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Tu BiSh'vat received renewed attention and importance. The kabbalists created a special ritual, modeled after the Passover seder, which celebrated God's presence in the natural world. As the rituals and readings for the Tu BiSh'vat seder developed, they were eventually collected into a book, *Pri Etz Hadar*, (*The Fruit of the Goodly Tree*), which was published in 1753.

The Tu BiSh'vat seder, full of imagery and symbolism, is divided into four sections that represent the four seasons. This seder also is divided into four mystical "spheres," each of which represents a different relationship between humans and the earth: *Assiya* (Actualization), *Yetzira* (Formation), *Beriah* (Creation), and *Atzilut* (Nobility).

As with the Passover seder, the Tu BiSh'vat seder evolved

to include four cups of wine or grape juice, but in varying shades of red, which represent the seasons: white for the bleak time of winter, white with a bit of red to represent the earth's awakening in early spring, red with a bit of white representing the blossoming of late spring, and dark red to represent the fullness of all the growing plants and vegetation along with the heat of summer.



Many of our contemporary Tu BiSh'vat *haggadot* (texts that set forth the order of the seder) draw on its rituals. Often we group the fruits into three types: fruits with tough outer shells and edible interiors (melons, peanuts, pomegranates, coconuts, citrus, etc), fruits with edible exteriors and inedible pits (dates, olives, plums, peaches, apples, etc) and fruits that are entirely edible (berries, figs, grapes, etc). These are said to represent different seasons and/or ways of being in the world, often following kabbalistic categories.

- See more at reformjudaism.org

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Va'ad Notes

BY MARC LIPSCHUTZ

At the October 21, 2015 Va'ad Meeting:

- Alice Harron reviewed our finances.
- Judith Wolfe presented the progress of the High Holiday Venue Subcommittee. The Committee explored multiple meeting places for HHDs 5777, and is now primarily focusing on two options.
- Laura Lowe asked us to consider methods to engage more people as prospective members.
- Rabbi Riter informed us we've been requested to open our CSZ home one Shabbat a month to approximately forty young adults who are currently attending Kabbalat Shabbat services at the Jewish Community Center under the auspices of the World Zionist Organization. We decided to invite the group to worship with us for a Shabbat. WZO will subsidize a Shabbat dinner in our oneg room and provide additional programming, such as dancing.
- Laura Lowe announced that we received a \$30,000 grant from the Haas Sr. Foundation to continue our Lightbox Collective identity work.
- Rabbi Riter distributed a handout outlining developmental stages and transitions within religious congregations, explaining that change doesn't occur immediately and that individuals and organizations evolve at different rates.

At the November 18, 2015 Va'ad Meeting:

- Michael Chertok presented an overview of the recent Union for Reform Judaism Biennial, including the resolution passed affirming the Reform Movement's commitment to the full equality of transgender and gender nonconforming people.

- We reviewed our budget and approved a motion to initiate a Friends and Family fundraising campaign through social media for Giving Tuesday.
- We unanimously approved two new households for membership, and agreed all congregants who have not renewed will receive telephone calls from Va'ad members.
- Rabbi Riter led an exercise exploring our decision-making processes.

At the December 16, 2015 Va'ad Meeting we:

- Learned that Torah portion Vayigash, "Approached," is about Yehudah approaching and assuming responsibility and ownership. What an appropriate model for the Va'ad!
- Examined our finances and confirmed that we are very close to budget. We will continue to call members who have not renewed without formally resigning, and are planning for another successful Rainbow fundraising campaign.
- Envisioned the future of our Hebrew School, Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer, in light of Rebecca Weiner's change in career path.
- Welcomed a second year of partnership with Rabbi Riter, who will continue with us through June 2017.
- Discussed uniting our Rabbi or Cantor with lay service leaders on our bima every Kabbalat Shabbat.
- Initiated a plan to publish the Jewish Gaily Forward on a quarterly basis.

All members are invited to attend Va'ad meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

Joining the Tribe

BY ANDREW WILLIAMSON

My mother's father came to the U.S. from Prussia in the late nineteenth century. He was eleven when he arrived in Philadelphia. His Jewish parents had sent him away so that he could avoid the draft. He never looked back to the Old World for anything, especially not his religion.

My family took a religious vacation until my Jewish partner got a crazy idea about adopting children from Russia. The Russians demanded that couples be married if they wanted to adopt more than one child. We got married at CSZ in the old synagogue by a curmudgeonly congregant named David Weinstein. Then, we adopted Jonathan and Vera. They went to a Latina-run day care across from our house. When our children said a Catholic grace before dinner, my wife told me later that it was at that moment that she decided to send our children to religious school at CSZ.

I liked the children's program. My kids and I started at the same point in our respective Jewish educations, and they quickly surpassed



me. There was no reason not to come with the children on Saturday morning. I wanted them to have a link to God that would be with them if and when they ever realized they needed it, but it would never take unless they saw me

there with them being "Jewish," too. So, the superficial reason for conversion was to "walk the walk" in front of my children. It was around this time that the children had their naming ceremony. On that particular day, Simchat Torah, they were on the bimah with all of their school friends around them – all of us inside the Torah which circled the room. We were literally wrapped in the religion. It was a moment of profound connection for me.

I decided to convert because Judaism at CSZ is a religion you do, and not something you watch. You get to hold up the Torah on Yom Kippur, and it means more than watching a paid professional do it. That is the reason I am a member here.

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Judith Wolfe in honor of all the High Holy Days volunteers for 5776.

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Oneg sponsored by Sha'ar Zahav va'ad, in honor of all the High Holy Days volunteers.

Oct 9-10

Oneg sponsored by James Carlson in memory of his grandfathers, Arthur Carlson & Filippo Tuzzolino.

October 23 & 24

Oneg sponsored by Donna Fein & Shelli Rawlings-Fein in memory of their mother & grandmother, Ruth Sutton.

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Oct 30-31

Oneg sponsored by CSZ in honor of Danny Grossman, Jewish Community Federation CEO & Linda Gerard

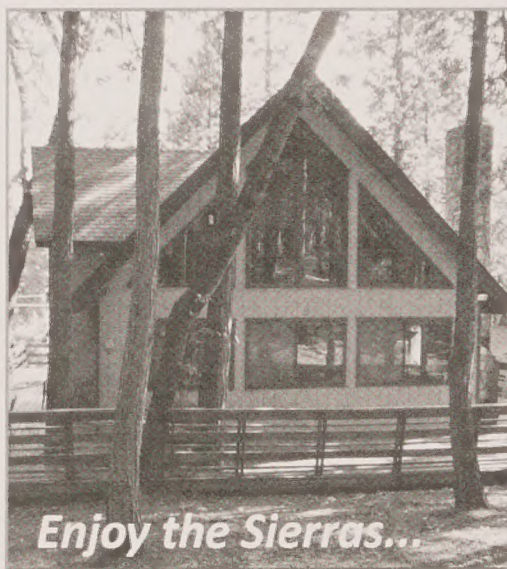
Flowers sponsored by Jane & Michael Rice in memory of Michael's father, James Rice & Jane's mother, Corinne Cornish

Nov. 6-7

Oneg sponsored by Laureen Kim & Alan Michels

Dec. 4

Klezmer Shabbat & Oneg sponsored by Alex Ingersoll and Martin Tannenbaum in memory of Martin's brother, Larry Tannenbaum



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Kathy McHenry
Rose Hauer, mother of Glen Hauer
Ruth Spiegel, mother of
Charles Spiegel
Jules Frankel, brother in-law of
Amy Schustack
Mollye Summit, aunt of
Sharyn Saslafsky
Phyllis Mackler, mother of
Mark Mackler

Mazel Tov:

To our members for donating so much
food to Jewish Family & Children's
Services during the 5776 High Holy
Days!

Member Yahrzeits

January

- 3 Aaron Nacamulli
- 9 Jerome Davis
- 14 Harry Clint Bigglestone
- 18 Keith Fenton
- 20 George Ash
- 26 Cheryl Orvis
- 27 Bill Ashley-Dobbin
- 28 Nathan Eli Weinstein

February

- 1 Steven Richter
- 2 Stephen Walters
- 4 John Atteridg
- 6 Ronald Wilmot
- 10 Helga Hahn
- 14 Ziggy Gimnich
- 14 Allen Harris
- 14 Barbara Rosenblum
- 15 Allan Ellis
- 17 Rabbi Jason Gaber
- 23 Leland Vogel
- 25 Evelyn Slenker

March

- 6 Pearl Lewin
- 7 Isabel Fishman
- 8 Seth Charney
- 8 Batya Kalis
- 16 Theodore Mendonca Jr.
- 16 Jamie Rosen
- 21 Rabbi Sanford Lowe
- 23 Noah Nacamulli
- 23 Paul Nemrow
- 28 Neill Rosen
- 31 James Harris Freedgood
- 31 Marvin Steele

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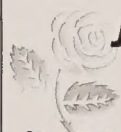
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Elderly Parents
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